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INDO- CHINA

and

WORLD PEACE

By **RICHARD WALKER**

INDO-CHINA AND WORLD PEACE

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I. The Threat of Another Korea—or Worse

LESS THAN five years ago, Indo-China to most people living in the United States was merely a place on a map. Today, in the Spring of 1954, we have come close to getting fully involved in a war in Indo-China, with thousands of Americans sent to die in its distant jungles.

What is more, this danger is still with us.

Yes, the danger of "another Korea," so soon after our three-year-long "police action" in that remote land had cost us 25,604 killed, 103,492 wounded, 7,955 missing, and upwards of 20 billion dollars in treasure. And the danger of something even worse.

What almost happened in April, 1954, nine months after the slaughter in Korea had been brought to an agonizing halt, might not have been restricted to a local "police action."

For the awful truth is that not only did our Administration leaders threaten "massive retaliation" against China, but we narrowly escaped their actual employment of atomic weapons in Indo-China.

And this is the danger that still confronts us.

"A month ago," reported columnists Joseph and Stewart Alsop from Washington in the N. Y. *Herald Tribune* of May 10, "the American Air Force and Navy joined in offering a plan that would almost have saved Dienbienphu. . . . Planes

from naval carriers and longer range planes from the American Air Force bases on Okinawa were to join in dropping hardly more than a hatful of tactical atomic bombs on Dien-bienphu's Communist besiegers."

Something stopped our intervention during April, 1954. What was it?

Pierre Mendes-France, a leader of France's Radical Socialist Party, answered this question in part when he spoke against the French government's Indo-China policy in the National Assembly June 9.

"United States intervention was to have taken place on the request of France April 28," said Mendes-France. "The warships carrying atomic aviation materiel were loaded and en route. President Eisenhower was to have asked Congress April 26 for authorization. Luckily the project for United States intervention was set aside by Britain and by public opinion in the United States."

Our intervention was stopped "by Britain and by public opinion in the United States." And to these may be added the French people, the Asian peoples, and other world forces of peace.

The French people called the war in Indo-China "the dirty war," because it befouled the name and honor of France. For eight years the French people, together with the Indo-Chinese peoples, have been the victims of this war. They have suffered the conscription and death of their youth. They have endured the crushing burdens of taxation and soaring living costs. They have been forced to remain in slums because the costs of the war rendered impossible any program of housing construction.

Their resistance balked the continuous efforts of the French imperialists and war-minded politicians to "internationalize" the war, that is, to give pro-war circles in the United States a free hand in Indo-China. And when Premier Laniel and Foreign Minister Bidault continued to reject the opportunity of ending the war at the Geneva Far Eastern Conference, the French people on June 12 forced out Laniel and Bidault.

Asian Peoples Said "No!"

The Asian peoples also helped to save us from involvement in Indo-China. They refused to be catspaws of colonialist powers against their fellow-Asians. They spurned the efforts of our State Department to organize a "Southeast Asian Alliance" against the Indo-Chinese peoples. And the conference of Asian prime ministers at Colombo demanded, on behalf of the governments of India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma and Indonesia, an end to the war and the withdrawal of foreign troops from Indo-China.

Back of the Churchill Government's opposition to intervention were not only Tory self-interest in Asia and ties with Commonwealth countries opposed to involvement. There was the strong resistance of a majority of the British people to any development which might lead to a hydrogen-bomb war; there was the British people's demand for serious negotiations at Geneva to achieve a peaceable settlement.

In our country, the outpouring of protests against intervention was unprecedented. Thousands of letters descended on the newspapers, the White House and Congress. Numerous trade union, religious, fraternal and women's organizations adopted resolutions opposing intervention.

Many of these protests coupled opposition against involvement in Indo-China with demands for control of the hydrogen and atomic weapons and for a cessation of hydrogen-weapon tests in the Pacific. Our countrymen saw the danger that involvement in Indo-China might spread into a full-scale Asian war with nuclear weapons, and then into a world war.

So, as Senator Ester Kefauver of Tennessee said on June 9, we came "within a hair's breadth" of intervention in Indo-China. And we are still standing on the brink of this move which *would mean death or serious injury to tens of thousands of our sons and brothers.*

Maneuvers Continue

For Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, in the middle of June, was still trying to forge his "Southeast Asian Alli-

ance," to obtain United Nations sanction for full-scale intervention, and to blueprint at Washington plans for military action with high-ranking generals of Britain, France, New Zealand and Australia. Senate Republican leader William F. Knowland was demanding that negotiations at Geneva be broken off. There was a desire in some quarters to intervene even if the French got out!

And Dulles, Knowland, Vice-President Richard Nixon and other Administration officials were continuing to employ the threat of "instant, massive retaliation"—the basic program of Administration war policy. This is the program which increases the danger that any "local war," any so-called "police action" at this time might become a world war. It is based on false "preventive war" and "push-button war" premises, which assert that swift hydrogen and atomic blows at the industrial centers of a target country will swiftly "win" a war and leave the attacker virtually unscathed.

The falsity of these premises has been amply set forth by scientists and military theorists. But their arguments have failed to convince many influential political and military leaders in our country.

The American people and the peoples of other countries stopped the Wall Street-Washington war mob in April. They can be stopped again. They must be stopped!

II. What's Indo-China To Us?

How DID THIS danger arise? How did we become involved in this Indo-China war, to the point that the leaders of our government speak about Indo-China and Southeast Asia being "vital" to the security and well-being of the people of the United States, without which our very national existence is put in jeopardy?

For most of us, Indo-China is still a strange and unknown land. Those of us who paid attention to this country prior to the current concern over it had probably done so during World War II. At that time, our newspapers and magazines had frequently published maps and illustrations showing

Indo-China's relationship to other Asian countries. And we learned that Indo-China's liberation from Japanese militarism was one of our war aims in the Far East.

Yet, even during the fighting, few of us really studied the map. Still fewer concentrated on the little peninsula squatting in the South China Sea east of Thailand (Siam) and south of the vast bulk of China. It was a rare American who knew that the 285,460 square miles of Indo-China are a third larger than France, twice the size of the British Isles, bigger than Texas and Massachusetts combined. Or that its population of 28,000,000 is more than the combined total of New York State and New England.

The important fact that a democratically-elected government, headed by Ho Chi Minh and ruling the State of Viet Nam, has existed in Indo-China since its recognition by France in 1946 has been known to only a very few of the people of our country.

Even less known are certain elementary facts about Indo-China which now assume importance. For instance, that the "Indochinese" are not one, but several peoples: the Vietnamese, a people closely related to the Chinese and numbering about three-fourths of the population of Indo-China, who live in the three coastal provinces of the peninsula called Tonkin, Annam and Cochin China; the Khmer nation, numbering approximately three and one-half millions, who live in the state called Cambodia; the Laotian nation of about 1.2 millions who live in the state which they call Pathet Lao, but which the French have named Laos. In addition, Indo-China, consisting of these three states which the French call the "Associated States of Indo-China," is also the homeland of several minor nationalities, including the Thai peoples in the mountains of northern Tonkin, and the Moi in southern Annam. Moreover, migrants from China and India have established communities in the country.

President Eisenhower, in his Aug. 4, 1953 speech to the Conference of State Governors at Seattle, had focused attention on Indo-China's importance as a rice-growing area and

a land rich in critical raw materials, such as tungsten, tin, rubber and manganese.

But not yet has any Administration spokesman tried to answer why, in view of the fact that greater quantities of such materials can be obtained peaceably and normally through lifting the State Department's restrictions against trade with China, the U.S. Government feels compelled to obtain smaller portions from Indo-China at the risk of war.

Nor has any Administration spokesman been able to reply to the argument that such materials may be obtained from Indo-China if the peoples of that country are truly independent under governments of their own choosing, through the normal processes of international trade and exchange.

Besides, 7,000 miles of ocean separate Saigon at the southern tip of the Indo-China peninsula from San Francisco, 11,000 from New York. How could the outcome of a struggle in that far-off land "sign and seal the death-warrant" of the United States, as Senator Joseph McCarthy had declared in a Milwaukee speech on April 24?

For all these reasons, the buildup for intervention caught us off guard, and we were almost involved in another war.

Now the persistence of the danger of our involvement in Indo-China and, in consequence, in an Asian and possible global conflict, makes it imperative that we scrutinize the Administration's arguments.

Arguments of Interventionists

The Administration tells us that we are obligated to intervene in Indo-China and Southeast Asia because—

1. There is no colonialism in the Indo-China issue at all. France had announced several times, and most emphatically last July, that she was fighting to give the three Associated States their freedom, their liberty. (President Eisenhower at his press conference, Feb. 17, 1954.)

2. "The free nations cannot afford to permit a further extension of the power of militant communism in Asia . . . its (Indo-China's) loss would be the prelude to the loss of all

Southeast Asia and a threat to a far wider area." (Admiral Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, April 15, 1954.)

3. The United States as a leader of the free world could not afford further retreat in Asia . . . if this Government could not avoid it, the Administration must face up to the situation and dispatch forces. (Vice President Richard Nixon, to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, April 16, 1954.)

These official pronouncements of Administration leaders assert that the issue in Indo-China is not one of people fighting for their independence from colonialism, but one of stopping so-called "Communist aggression." This is the nub of the Administration's position.

But what is the truth?

The fact of the matter is that those who hold this view are a distinct minority not only in the world, but also in our own country.

Except for the French colonial bureaucracy and a section of the governing circles in France, and for such self-interested circles as those around South Korean President Syngman Rhee, the Chiang Kai-shek regime on Formosa, and the French puppet "Emperor" Bao Dai, there is universal belief that the issue in Indo-China is colonialism.

This is because the record on this point is so clear.

Continuity of Liberation Struggles

Since 1858, when French colonialists first invaded Indo-China, the French have ruled the country with callous disregard of the interests of the peoples. For 80 years the peoples of Indo-China have been struggling against French imperialism. Their struggles included many armed revolts and wars of liberation, such as the Truong Quyen Revolt in South Viet-Nam and the Po Kum Bo Revolt in Khmer (Cambodia) in 1863, the Hue Revolt in 1884, the Khmer people's uprising in 1885 and 1886, the Saigon outbreak in 1886, the Phan Dinh Phung Revolt of Viet-Nam in 1893, the war of liberation led by Hoang Hoa Tham which began in 1903, the Phu Mi Bum

uprising led by Phol Ba Duct in Pathet Lao (Laos) in 1910 and merging into a guerrilla war which lasted till 1935, the Thainguayen revolt in 1917, and the Yenbai Revolt in 1930.

The current warfare in Indo-China is, therefore a continuation of this century-old struggle for liberation from colonialism. The fact that the French have proclaimed the "independence" of the Associated States of Indo-China has deceived no one with a knowledge of this protracted struggle. For, throughout this century of warfare, the French on numerous occasions have sought to undermine and destroy the liberation forces by various kinds of tactical maneuvers and phony concessions.

"Treaties" between leaders recognized by the French and the colonial administration were frequent devices for undermining the peoples' resistance. France signed such "treaties" with the Nguyen Dynasty (Bao Dai's family) of Viet-Nam in 1862; with the Kingdoms of Viet-Nam and Khmer in 1884; with the Kingdom of Pathet Lao (Laos) in 1893, and again in 1899. All these "treaties" contained solemn French promises to guard and promote the welfare of the peoples.

After World War II, when the French were faced with a liberation struggle more powerful than before, France began demagogic promises of "independence." New "treaties" incorporating this promise were signed with the Kingdom of Pathet Lao on Jan. 7, 1946, with the Kingdom of Khmer in the same year, with the three Kingdoms of Khmer, Pathet Lao and Viet-Nam in 1949, and against on July 3, 1953. In each of these treaties, and particularly the July 3, 1953 agreements to which President Eisenhower referred, the French pledge of full independence was made subject to the requirements of the "French Union," a term which connotes the voluntary, democratic association of the peoples in French-governed territories on a basis of equality, but which the French colonialists equate with "French Empire." The Empire's rulers, who are obviously in Paris, were thus given veto power over "autonomous" members of the Empire. And it is this condition which disposes of the fiction of "independence."

Indo-China's "1776"

But what is more important is a fact which the Administration has tried to conceal from the American people. This is that the French also signed such a "treaty" with Ho Chi Minh, President of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam. This agreement of March 6, 1946 stipulated that the French Government recognized the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam as a "free state having its own government, parliament, army and finance."

But like other treaties the French had signed, it was a mere scrap of paper to which the Paris government paid no attention. The day following its signature French troops in South Viet-Nam launched attacks on Viet Nam forces, French officers at Hanoi refused to give over the customs control to Vietnamese representatives. In November, the French bombarded Hanoi and precipitated the carnage which has destroyed so many lives of the French, Indo-Chinese and African peoples for eight years. Today, certain circles in our country want to destroy American lives as well.

Such is the truth about the character of the war in Indo-China. It is a truth which other, more far-sighted Americans, are compelled to concede. For instance, in the Aug. 14, 1951 issue of *Look* magazine, U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice William O. Douglas wrote:

"We throw our military power as well as our influence behind some of the most vicious elements in Asia. I was in Asia in 1950 when Indo-China asked the United States for military aid against the Viets. A shudder passed through Southeast Asia when General Marshall replied that the government of Indo-China could be assured that America would send planes and tanks to help her fight the Communists. Of course, the rebels in Indo-China are Communist-led. But the French imposed on Indo-China one of the most vicious colonial systems in all history. If any power had done to us what the French have done to the people of Indo-China, we would produce the most glorious revolution the world ever witnessed."

These facts expose the falseness of Dulles' statement that Indo-China under French rule is characterized by an "orderly development to independence" which the "Communist aggressors" are trying to destroy (Speech to the Overseas Press Club of America, March 29, 1954). Dulles means by "orderly development" what King George meant in the 1770's in respect to the American colonists. But the Indo-Chinese took their example from Washington and Jefferson, and as Justice Douglas also points out, based their very Declaration of Independence on our document. What of Dulles' claim that the Communists "whipped up the spirit of nationalism until it became violent," thereby precipitating the war?

The record of uprisings, revolts and protracted wars of liberation since French occupation of the country in 1857 disposes of this claim. Dulles obviously assumes that the American people are totally ignorant of the history of Indo-China.

Who are Ho Chi Minh and the Vietminh?

What of Dulles' charge that President Ho Chi Minh is a "Kremlin agent" who has imposed Communist rule over the Viet-Nam areas under his control?

This "Kremlin agent" charge, be it remembered, has been handed down from Hitler to Mussolini to Franco to Hirohito to Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek. It is, in the mouth of notorious Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy, a name for ex-Presidents Roosevelt and Truman as well as the majority of the American people.

It is true that Ho visited Moscow, that he visited China during the beginning of the Chinese revolution under Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek. But he was also in Paris together with 100,000 Vietnamese troops and 40,000 Vietnamese workers during World War I. And prior to that, since his boyhood and throughout his life, Ho Chi Minh had been a leader of the Indo-China peoples' struggles for independence. This fact Dulles does not tell us.

Nor does he tell us that Ho was the leader of the Indo-China resistance to Japanese militarism at a time when our national existence was threatened by the Fascist Axis, and when our military position in the Far East was under Japanese attack. Dulles does not mention that Bao Dai and the French puppet Kings of Laos and Cambodia collaborated with the Japanese along with the Vichy French, and placed at the disposal of Japanese militarism the full resources of their countries, while Ho Chi Minh led the liberation struggle which had helped defeat the Japanese before our troops were in a position to help.

Nor does Dulles tell us that the Vietminh (The Viet-Nam Independence League) was established amidst this struggle against Japanese militarism on May 19, 1941 (before the attack on Pearl Harbor) at a joint conference of political parties and groups including Buddhists, Catholics, Peasants, Businessmen, Women and Youth organizations and the Nationalists, Socialist and Communist Parties. It was this representative conference which elected Ho Chi Minh its President.

Dulles omits to tell us that similar liberation organizations were set up in Cambodia and Laos; that on Sep. 2, 1945, the Vietminh proclaimed establishment of Independence which quoted from our own Declaration of 1776; that the new government held National Assembly elections on a nation-wide scale and on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage irrespective of nationality, belief, property ownership or sex, in which 90 per cent of the people participated and gave the Vietminh 230 of the 300 seats in the National Assembly; that even today, of the 16 members of President Ho Chi Minh's Cabinet, only five are Communists, the others including Catholics, Buddhists, businessmen, intellectuals, and workers.

All these facts give the lie to the Administration. They show that not only is the real issue in Indo-China a struggle of the people for independence from colonialism, but that this struggle has a leadership representative of all sections of the nation engaged in it. It is an all-embracing national struggle for independence.

III. Whose "Vital Interests"?

WHAT OF THE claim, then, that if Indo-China's people win this struggle the "vital" interests of the United States will be placed in peril?

Here, we have to ask, what "vital" interests? Or more to the point, WHOSE vital interests? In attempting to answer this question we come upon some interesting facts, the chief one being the not-so-well-known fact that certain interests in our country have been attempting to intervene in Indo-China since the end of World War II.

In 1944, Ho offered his cooperation to the Allies against Japanese militarism, and requested particularly U.S. military support and recognition of Viet-Nam's independence under the Atlantic Charter. "The Americans made no promises," reports Roger Pinto, writing in the *United Nations World* of April 1950, "but those in Kunming did begin supplying the Vietminh resistance fighters with arms. The Vietminh began guerrilla warfare against the Japs in northern Tonkin. They helped American pilots shot down in Indochina to escape, and they fought with American equipment parachuted to them. . . . Late in 1944, an American pilot flew him to China, where he called on General Claire Chennault in Kunming."

That, be it remembered, happened while Franklin Delano Roosevelt was still in command of U.S. military and political policy.

With the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, the reactionary circles in our country began to plot the seizure of Indo-China from French control. The Office of Strategic Services (OSS), under General William Donovan (who is now Ambassador to Thailand, bordering Indo-China!), carried on the preliminary intrigue and scheming to accomplish this aim.

Hoping to seize control of the people's liberation movement, OSS men began in late 1945 to encourage Vietnamese resistance to the French government's plan for re-establishing French control. Led by Major Patti, OSS men told the Viet-

name that since France had not participated in the Potsdam Conference, no agreement existed that French sovereignty should be restored. In return for this support, in October 1945, the U.S. offered Ho Chi Minh economic assistance in exchange for concessions to be extended solely to the Americans, allowing the establishment of air bases, railroads, and roads by U.S. companies.

Ho Chi Minh refused. And from his refusal can be dated the hostility in our country toward the Vietminh and the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam.

On September 22, 1947, the Truman Administration sent the arch-reactionary, pro-Vichy former U.S. Ambassador to France, William Bullitt, to confer with French colonial authorities in Indo-China. Bullitt's mission was to try to persuade the French to restore Bao Dai to the Annamite throne.

Emile Bollaert, French High Commissioner in Indo-China, in reporting his conversation with Bullitt, noted that: "Mr. Bullitt seems to show special interest in economic questions. . . ."

Record of Intervention

Eight months after Bullitt proposed Bao Dai's restoration, the French had established a puppet regime for Viet-Nam, signed a treaty with Bao Dai "recognizing the independence of Viet-Nam," with Viet-Nam "proclaiming its allegiance to the French Union" and promising to "respect the rights and interests of French nationals." In September 1948, almost a year from the day he had proposed Bao Dai's restoration, Bullitt met Bao Dai in Geneva for mutual congratulations and plans. And with Bao Dai's assumption, in June 1949, of the role of "Chief of State" of the puppet Viet-Nam regime, U.S. big business circles intensified their efforts to seize the commanding positions in Indo-China's economy. The Truman Administration's "assistance" program was the jimmy they used to pry open the safe. The chronology of these efforts is as follows:

Jan. 24, 1950, Philip C. Jessup, U.S. Ambassador at large,

visits Saigon to confer with Bao Dai on concessions in exchange for U.S. "aid" against the "Communists."

Feb. 7, 1950, the U.S. Government recognizes Bao Dai and the puppet Kings of Laos and Cambodia.

Feb. 12, 1950, the *New York Times*, organ of big business, reports: "Indo-China is a prize worth a large gamble. In the north are exportable tin, tungsten, zing, manganese, coal, lumber and rice, and in the south are rice, rubber, tea, pepper, cattle and hides. . . ."

March 6, 1950, a U.S. economic mission headed by Robert Allen Griffen arrives in Saigon to investigate investment possibilities in Indo-China.

March 16, 1950, U.S. warships and warplanes stage a show of strength over Saigon and in Saigon Bay. Three days later, protest demonstrations by the population are fired on, a number of person killed and wounded, others are arrested.

May 8, 1950, U.S. announce it will send "economic aid and military equipment" to France and its puppet regimes in Indo-China.

May 12, 1950, the Paris newspaper *L'Aurore* published an interview with Leon Pignon, French High Commissioner in Indo-China, in which he said: "The arrival of a number of Americans in Viet-Nam has perhaps induced some Viet-Nameese politicians to turn their eyes towards Washington, and away from Paris. We must not hide the fact that the presence of more Americans will cause difficulties for us if we are not careful."

May 30, 1950, a U.S. economic mission headed by Robert Blum arrives in Saigon to control the use of the U.S. "aid."

June 27, 1950, President Truman, directing the U.S. Navy and Air Force to intervene in Korea and Formosa, also directs a stepping up of "aid" to Indo-China and orders a military mission there.

July 15, 1950, a U.S. military mission arrives, tours all the Indo-China states, especially the border with China, and stresses importance of training puppet troops.

August 10, 1950, first consignment of U.S. war materials arrives in Indo-China.

December 23, 1950, the U.S. signs treaties of mutual assistance with the three puppet Indo-China regimes, obtaining the right to supervise the use of U.S. war materials and the right to "inspect" the resources of Indo-China.

French Imperialists Worried

March 16, 1951, according to a report in the Dutch newspaper *De Waarheid*, the National Council of French Industrialists complained in a memorandum to the French government that the U.S. economic mission in Indo-China had openly intervened in the internal affairs of Viet-Nam and had induced Indo-China puppet officials to issue directives favoring U.S. manufacturers. The memorandum said U.S. trusts had thus established their control over tin mining, rubber and rice production, as a result of which trade between France and Indo-China had dropped while that between Indo-China and the United States had greatly increased.

July 25, 1951, Thomas Dewey, Governor of New York State and a major power in the Republican Party, visits Bao Dai in Saigon to study the "possibility of military and economic aid being speeded up in Indo-China in the light of the Korea armistice talks."

September 7-8-9, 1951, the U.S. concludes with all three puppet regimes in Indo-China agreements "eliminating restrictive practice" on the import of U.S. goods, permitting U.S. supervision of assistance, and pledging "detailed information" on economic and military matters.

December 19, 1952, the Alsop Brothers report in their syndicated column that with the inauguration of President Eisenhower, a new bold plan for winning the Indo-China war will be adopted.

February 3, 1953, Robert S. Allen writes in his syndicated column that Secretary Dulles is putting heat on France to win the war in Indo-China, and is demanding that Indo-Chinese puppet officers be trained by the U.S.

May 2, 1953, following the liberation of Samnua province by the Laos People's Liberation Army (not the Vietminh),

Dulles announces "we have already taken steps to expedite the delivery of critically-needed military items" to the French and puppet Laos forces.

May 4, 1953, Senator Alexander Wiley (R-Wis.), chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, proposes that the U.S. give atomic weapons to France to use in Indo-China.

June 13, 1953, puppet King Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia "flees" to Thailand, where General Donovan is U.S. Ambassador, and declares France refuses to give Cambodia independence.

June 18, 1953, the Paris newspaper *L'Observateur* says U.S. encouragement to King Norodom Sihanouk is motivated by U.S. desire for (1) a port on the Cambodia coast, (2) a strategic base on the Gulf of Siam, (3) Cambodia's support of a "confederation" to include Laos, Thailand and the Malayan Peninsula, as a political and military base against South-east Asia.

August 18, 1953, the U.S. State Department issues a pamphlet entitled *Indo-China: the war in Viet-Nam, Cambodia and Laos*, which reports that: "Thus far we have supplied the French Union forces and the national armies of Cambodia, Laos and Viet-Nam with more than 170 million rounds of small-arms ammunition; 16,000 transport vehicles and trailers; 850 combat vehicles; 350 military aircraft; 250 naval craft; 10,500 radio sets; 90,000 small-arms and automatic shells."

Then followed the succession of Eisenhower Administration pronouncements concerning Indo-China, a number of which have been quoted above. When Ho Chi Minh offered to enter negotiations for an armistice last December, the Eisenhower Administration ignored his proposals. Instead, as the *Wall Street Journal* reported March 10, the Administration was determined to continue the war, even if the French pulled out. And this, even while the conferees at the Geneva Far Eastern Conference were considering plans for a cease-fire, remained the Administration objective.

Not Our Vital Interests

On the basis of this record, certain conclusions have become obvious:

1. The real aim of the forces in our country striving for intervention in Indo-China has nothing whatsoever to do with defense of the "free world," but is to seize the riches and strategic areas of the country.

2. In order to dispossess the French, and simultaneously to lull the anti-colonial, anti-imperialist sentiments of the American people, these forces misrepresented their aim as one of striving to obtain independence for the peoples of Indo-China. By this means they sought to by-pass the French and deal directly with the puppet regimes, which they believed could be bribed and subordinated to their own control.

3. In order to exploit the country through the puppet regimes, these forces deem it necessary to arm and strengthen them in relation to their peoples, so as to enable them to suppress all opposition and resistance to their new masters. Hence the State Department's insistence on the training of puppet officers and troops by U.S. military advisers.

The import of these conclusions is that the "vital" interests in Indo-China and Southeast Asia for which we are being dragged into war are not ours at all—not the American people's and not the American nation's—but the interests of a handful of the biggest bankers and corporations.

In the jargon of these money-bags, their stake in profits has become identical with the "national interest." Their lust for raw materials and strategic bases is called "national security." And the methods they use to achieve their aims they label "technical assistance," "anti-colonialism," "defense of the free world" against "Communist aggression."

IV. Our Real National Interest

THE TRUE national interests of our country require really free, independent states in Indo-China and Southeast Asia. This

means independence not only from French domination, but from U.S. domination as well.

If, after achieving independence, the national states of Indo-China wish to retain close ties with France, that is their prerogative, one of the essential prerogatives of sovereignty. Indeed, Ho Chi Minh's delegation at the Geneva Conference has indicated the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam would accept such close economic and cultural relations with France, but he has insisted on the right of the Vietnamese freely to make this choice.

Likewise, if these states wish to establish close ties with our country, that also is their prerogative. And nothing that the Vietminh has ever said allows the slightest ground for believing, as the Eisenhower Administration says, that a Vietminh victory will result in the "loss" of Indo-China. It would certainly result in a loss of a source of super-profits for certain oligarchs in our country. But as Joseph Starobin, the only American newspaperman ever to visit the Vietminh and interview its leaders, has noted in his recent book (*Eyewitness in Indo-China*, Cameron & Kahn, New York, 1954), the Vietminh leaders and the Vietnamese people, from Ho Chi Minh to the ordinary peasant and soldier, have respect and warm feelings for the American people. It is unthinkable that a free, independent Viet-Nam would not desire to trade its raw materials for our industrial products, machine tools, locomotives, and the like.

By the same token, if the free, independent states of Indo-China desire to establish normal, friendly and business-like relations with the Chinese People's Republic, the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies of Eastern Europe, that also is the prerogative of sovereign states. For the Eisenhower Administration to attempt to prevent such relations while talking about "independence" for Indo-China is the rankest hypocrisy. Dictation of foreign policy to a nation is irreconcilable with respect for the independence of that nation. It is, in fact, an infringement of the nation's sovereignty. It is a form of intervention in the internal affairs of other countries.

Truth About Liberated Areas

Dulles, of course, tries to conceal from us this aggressive aspect of the Administration's policy. He tries to justify intervention in Indo-China by posing as a savior of the Indo-Chinese peoples from Ho Ci Minh's "police rule" and "slave state." This zeal for "saving" peoples who have not sought "salvation" from us borders on the presumptuous, to say the least. But in addition, the allegations of "police rule" and "slavery" in free Viet-Nam assume that the American people know nothing of the truth.

The truth is, as Starobin and others bear witness, that the achievements of the people under Vietminh leadership, in the fighting lines and behind them, attest to the freedom of the Viet-Nam workers, farmers and soldiers. Nothing else could explain the eight-year-long endurance of the French-imposed war; the fact that industrial output is increasing from 15 to 20 per cent each year; that workers' real wages are five times greater than those in French-administered territory; that an eight-hour working day is in force and child labor is prohibited; that illiteracy has been eliminated and there are now 3,700 primary schools attended by 430,000 children and 206 secondary schools with 30,000 pupils as compared with four secondary schools, 1,700 opium dens and 120,300 wineshops under the French administration; that deputies to the National Assembly and local government bodies are—for the first time—elected on the basis of universal, direct and equal suffrage by secret ballot.

But the false pretext given by Dulles and other Administration spokesmen for the policy of intervention does not simply apply to Indo-China. It is the basis of the hostility towards the Chinese People's Republic. It was the alibi for the ill-fated and costly "police action" in Korea. It is the justification for our meddling in Italy, Greece, Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and Europe. What is at issue in the Indo-China situation is our foreign policy.

A True People's Foreign Policy

Clearly, this foreign policy is daily imposing more hardships on our families and communities. It is not the vast reservoirs of surplus capital in the pockets of the Morgans, Rockefellers, duPonts and the other money kings of our country which the Administration is using to intervene in other nations. It is the money in our treasury, money which has largely come from our pay-envelopes in the form of withholding taxes. We are having to foot the bill for adventures which are intended to add more wealth to the wealthy few.

What we give up in the form of withholding taxes is not all. The funds which might provide us with great housing projects, public works, higher minimum wages, adequate pensions and disability payments, a national health service, schools, hospitals and recreation facilities—these funds are diverted into financing such adventures, and in building a gigantic war machine in case the adventures misfire. Instead of a program of peacetime jobs to meet the threat of depression, we are being plunged further into economic crisis by having to pay for a program of overseas expansion and war.

This policy threatens not only our livelihood, but our liberties and lives as well. This policy is fully supported by McCarthy and the fascist circles in our country. They see our involvement in a colonial war or an anti-Chinese and anti-Soviet war as the opportunity for their seizure of power. They know how many of our liberties were whittled away during the Korean war. No wonder the McCarthy fascists are among the loudest advocates of intervention in Southeast Asia and other colonial countries, of continued hostility and eventual aggression against China. These fascist-minded circles would not hesitate to use atomic weapons, even the hydrogen bomb, thus putting our very national existence, along with much of civilization and the rest of mankind, in peril of extinction.

We Can Change Foreign Policy

The national interest of our country, the interest of world peace, and the interest of our families and ourselves as indi-

vidual Americans, all require that we put an end to this present foreign policy. The opportunities and possibilities for doing so are yet favorable. The Asian peoples—China, India, Burma, Indonesia, Pakistan, Ceylon—have demonstrated their unwillingness to be drawn into Dulles' scheme for intervention in Indo-China through "united action." The European peoples—British, French and others—have likewise resisted the Eisenhower Administration's maneuvers. Hundreds of millions of people in other countries of Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Latin America are fighting to relax world tensions. The Soviet Union, People's China and the People's Democracies have made overtures for a massive increase in trade with us, for friendly, normal relations with us.

We owe it to our country, ourselves, and our children now to demand and fight for a new foreign policy, based on respect for other peoples and the establishment of normal, business-like relations with all countries. To urge such a new foreign policy on the President and the Congress, to participate now in the election campaign with a view to guaranteeing such a foreign policy, is the highest form of patriotism today.

Let us write letters to the White House, our Congressmen, state and city officials, newspapers, the trade union press, making known our need and demand for a real American people's foreign policy!

Let's circulate petitions, submit resolutions, hold forums and lectures and debates, so as to make clear our need and demand for a foreign policy that serves our national interest!

Let's enter the election campaign with questions for all candidates, but a vote for only those candidates who pledge to resist involvement in Indo-China, to fight against the program of "instant, massive retaliation," and to fight for a foreign policy in the interest of our country and our people, rather than in the interest of a handful of corporation owners!

In such a foreign policy that serves the great majority of the people is the key to our real vital interests.

